Research Organizer
Library Website: www.mvulibrary.org

1. <u>Get Started</u>: Find a "researchable" topic by reading a broad, general article about it.

- Search **World Book Encyclopedia Online** from the library's website ("Research Tools" tab) to read an overview.
- OR try the library's print versions of **World Book Encyclopedia** or **Encyclopedia Britannica**

<u>Thesis Statement</u>: What do you plan to prove and how do you plan to prove it? Try using one of these prompts to start:

Even though..... While...... Although..... Because..... Since.....

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2. <u>Find Sources</u>: What words describe your topic or are related to it?

- List keywords, synonyms, **broader** subjects, **narrower** subjects. Brainstorm a bit. These words will be your search terms for books, articles, websites, etc.

Find Books:

- Search "Destiny," our library catalog ("Catalog" tab on website) - you will probably want to search with your **broad** keywords since your narrow ones might be too specific. This will tell you what books we have that relate to your topic.
    - You may also find eBooks that you can read from your computer, tablet, smartphone, etc. These count as a "print resource."
- Search "**GVRL**," "**Salem Press**," or "**Salem Health**" ("Research Tools" tab) for eBooks that are organized by subjects.

Find Articles:

- Search "**Infotrac**" (Vermont Online Library) on the "Research Tools" section of the library website. This database will probably have the most articles. These are reliable sources and not found through a "Google" search.
    - Use your **broad** or **narrow** (specific) keywords and select "Search."
    - When you get your results, remember to check the **"Only Full Text"** box in the upper left column.
    - Scroll down the left column and use the section **"Limit Search By"** and **"Related Topic"** to narrow your search results. If you scroll down farther you can limit your results even more, especially by date of publication, up to articles published in the past week.
    - Create an account so you can bookmark and save the good articles, <u>or</u> copy & paste the URL to your GoogleDocs, <u>or</u> e-mail them to yourself, <u>or</u> write them down in your notes, <u>or</u> do all of these, <u>but don't lose them</u>! You will need these later for you bibliography.
- Search "**Opposing Viewpoints**" if you need articles that show both sides of a topic or controversial subject. Again, bookmark what you find and/or make note of the URL for your citations.

Find Websites:

- Use "**WebPath Express**" (Library "Catalog" tab – left column) – You will find results that educators have selected, so you know you can trust the sites.
- If you use Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc., search **smart** to get the best results:
  - o Put quotes around your keywords: "Civil War Battles"
  - o Click "**Advanced Search**" and limit your searches to .edu or .org sites
  - o Use "Not" to get rid of unwanted results: If you are researching dolphins, you can exclude the Miami Dolphins team by searching "dolphins NOT football."
  - o Use "And" to narrow your search more specifically: If you are researching the use of dolphins by the Navy, search "dolphins AND military."
- No matter where you search, keep track of your sources URL's so you can find them again and cite them correctly!

3. <u>Evaluate Your Sources</u>:

Are they high quality? Are they reliable? Are they objective? Are they current/up-to-date? (If you have used **Infotrac** and **WebPath Express** they should be all of these things.) Do they support your thesis statement? It's easy to get off track when you find a source with lots of information on the broad topic, but you want information about your specific (narrow) thesis. Keep your focus on your thesis.

4. <u>Take Notes</u>:

Note cards? Notebook paper? GoogleDocs? "Word" document? EasyBib? What works for you?

- Paraphrase or summarize your notes. Don't plagiarize!
- Make sure your notes help you prove your thesis statement.
- Remember to cite your sources on your notes. (Really – this is important!)

5. <u>Cite Your Sources</u>:

Use **EasyBib.com** ("Research Tools " tab) to keep track of your sources. Create an account (it's free) – you will use if for other projects in school.

6. <u>Organize and Write</u>:

- Organize your notes first, before writing. Try using a chart, diagram, or outline to get organized. It may seem like an extra step, but it makes the writing so much easier.
- Write a draft. Focus on the notes that prove your thesis. Make sure you cite your sources.
- Have someone else read it – a friend, a parent – and ask for comments.
- Edit. This is important. Is your thesis clearly stated? Does your content support and relate to your thesis (did you stay on topic)? Do you have good transitions between paragraphs? Do you have a strong conclusion? Did you include all of your parenthetical references and a final bibliography? Did you check your grammar and spelling?
- Finish. Review your teacher's instructions. Did you include everything?

7. <u>Evaluate Your Paper</u>:

- Were you given a rubric? Did you review it carefully and honestly compare your paper to it? Is there anything you could add that would improve your grade based on the rubric requirements?
- Take a moment to look at your final product and see what you think.
- Is your final product something you are proud of?